

10. (Previously presented) The hose coupling, as claimed in claim 6, wherein blocking means are provided for locking the pair of coupling members with each other in a coupled condition.

REMARKS

The Examiner's action, the objections to the specification and drawings and the rejection of the claims have been carefully considered and the application has been amended accordingly. Specifically, the objection to the drawings has been obviated by cancellation of the language "and in relation to a radial plane" from claim 7. In addition, the objection to the specification has been overcome by adding appropriate section headings to the specification. In the claims, the term "in a bayonet-type fashion" has been cancelled from claim 6. In claim 9, the language has been substantially amended so that "the distance in the peripheral direction between two neighboring cams" is only slightly greater than the "width of the cams." It is respectfully submitted that one skilled in the art can readily determine whether the recited peripheral distance is only slightly greater than the width of the cams and, therefore, the amended claim language is clear within the meaning of 35 USC 112, second paragraph. It should be apparent from the disclosure that the peripheral distance must be greater in order to allow the cams of the symmetric coupling member to be inserted. The language "slightly greater" limits the scope of the claim to a cam arrangement which allows insertion of the cooperating cams with only a small clearance. In view of the amendments to claims 6 and 9, it is urged that the rejections under 35 USC 112, second paragraph have been overcome and, therefore, these rejections should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 6-10 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Horimoto (U.S. Patent No. 5,857,713). For the reasons which follow, this ground of rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 6 recites a symmetrical hose coupling comprising a pair of like coupling members. As pointed out in the Background of the Invention section of the specification, this arrangement is very successfully used by fire departments and other emergency responders, such as in regions which have been destroyed by an earthquake or otherwise affected by disaster. Lengths of

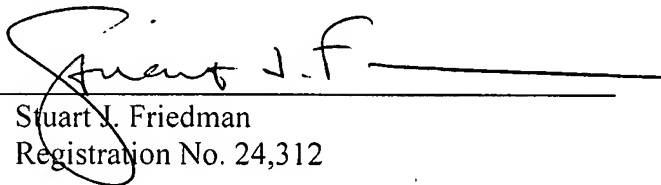
unconnected hose comprising the couplings, according to the invention, may be thrown from transport vehicles onto the ground and then connected to each other as required. In the situations where such hoses are required to be used, the ground is likely to be very dirty and muddy. Thus, as the lengths of hose are thrown onto the ground, dirt and mud may be introduced into the gap between two neighboring cams in the coupling members. Because of the arrangement of the cams in the present invention, recited in amended claim 6 as a cam ring having a plurality of integral cams arranged on the periphery of the cam ring and projecting from the cam ring in a radial direction, the end faces of the cams on one coupling member facing a respective other coupling member stay free from any part of the other respective coupling member when connected. This means that any dirt stuck in the gap between two neighboring cams is automatically pushed outside of the coupling members when engaging the cams to facilitate connection of the coupling members, and thus the lengths of hose.

However, the situation is entirely different in the hose coupling disclosed in Horimoto. In all embodiments shown in Horimoto, the cams are arranged on the end surface of the cam ring facing the respective other coupling half and do not project radially from the cam ring. Therefore, any dirt in the gap between two neighboring cams would be pushed against the cam ring and remain in the gap when inserting the cams of the other coupling half, thus rendering insertion of the cams, and coupling of the hoses, impossible. The couplings disclosed in Horimoto must, therefore, be cleaned before the coupling members are coupled to each other. In an emergency situation, where time is of the essence, this takes far too long and is thus not a practical solution for a hose coupling. The assertion by the Examiner that the slots or recesses in the connector body, such as tool receiving recesses 120, which are adapted to receive a tool to aid in separating the connector bodies, result in the cams projecting radially from the cam ring misreads the meaning of claim 6 and the disclosure of Horimoto. The cams must project radially from and relative to the cam ring, not relative to a recess which may be formed somewhere along the connector body. There is nothing in Figure 19 (or in any other Figure in Horimoto) which teaches one skilled in the art to arrange the cams to project radially from the cam ring. One skilled in the art would learn from Horimoto only to design a hose coupling in which the cams project axially from the end surface of the cam ring. There is no teaching or suggestion in

Horimoto to provide the cams arranged on the periphery of the cam ring so as to project radially from the cam ring and no suggestion that arranging the cams to project radially would confer any advantage on the resulting hose coupling. Accordingly, Horimoto does not anticipate claims 6-10 within the meaning of 35 USC 102(b) nor does Horimoto render obvious the cam arrangement of claims 6-10 within the meaning of 35 USC 103.

For the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the rejection under 35 USC 102(b) over Horimoto should be reconsidered and withdrawn and an early notice of allowance issued directed to pending claims 6-10.

Respectfully submitted,

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